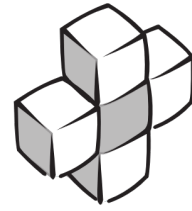


SMACC
Making Disciples of Jesus Christ



Bible Study Series:

Daniel



Our Mission:

*To glorify God together in response to his grace
by making disciples of Jesus Christ*

About These Studies

These studies were written by various SMACC leaders for use among young working adults and university students. You are most welcome to use and adapt these studies for your own context. Where you do so please provide the following acknowledgment.

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These studies are written as a companion to the sermon series available at:
https://smacc.stmaryscathedral.org.my/sermons/?wpfc_sermon_series=daniel

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Study 1: “Exiled, But Not Defiled” (Daniel 1)

Getting Started

1. Have you ever felt totally lost in life? How did you cope with that feeling?

Context

2. *Read Daniel 1:1-2.* What is the historical setting of the book of Daniel? Where are we in salvation history? (cf. 2 Kings 25:1-21)

3. Verse 2 said God ‘gave’ his people into Nebuchadnezzar’s hand. Why did God allow his people to be taken into captivity in Babylon?

From the beginning of Israel’s history as a nation, God has promised blessing if they will love and worship him alone, but curses and eviction from the land if they follow other gods. (See Deuteronomy 28:1-9, 15-19, 36-37.)

It did not take long for God’s people to turn away from him, and despite many warnings to repent they finally reached the limit of God’s patience. (See Jeremiah 32:26-33.)

Daniel 1:1-2 sets the scene for the whole book, both historically and theologically. It’s 605BC. Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar is the new world power. Jerusalem is under siege and exile is imminent. Complete destruction of Judah is still 20 years away, but in this attack Jerusalem’s king and temple are overrun, and it looks like Yahweh has been defeated.

4. What kind of literature is Daniel? How would this impact how we read it?

Digging In

Read Daniel 1

5. What does King Nebuchadnezzar do in verse 2-6? What appears to be his motivation in doing this?

6. How does the changing of their names contribute to this?

Daniel: <i>God is my judge</i>	Beltshazzar: <i>May Bel protect his life</i>
Hananiah: <i>Yahweh is gracious</i>	Shadrach: <i>Command of Aku</i>
Mishael: <i>Who is what God is?</i>	Meshach: <i>Who is what Aku is?</i>
Azariah: <i>Yahweh helps</i>	Abednego: <i>Servant of Nebo</i>

(Bel, Aku and Nebo are names of Babylonian gods. Bel was the name of the head god Marduk. Aku was the moon god, and Nebo was the God of Sidom and agriculture)

7. What decision does Daniel make? Why?

8. What is the result of the "test"?

9. What was the outcome after the three year programme?

10. Why do you think the author tells us how long Daniel remained in the King's court? (v21)

Thinking it Through

11. Although Nebuchadnezzar seemed all powerful, who was really in control? How does this make Daniel and his friends 'wise' rather than 'foolish'?

12. Why was it important that Daniel refused to follow the ways of the Babylonians?

Read John 18:33-38, 19:7-11

13. How does Daniel point us forward to Christ? Who is ultimately in control of Jesus trial?

Application

14. Daniel and his friends are expected to completely submit to an ungodly authority. What example does Daniel set for believers in this situation? (cf. Matthew 10:26-33)

15. The four men completed the education programme, but refused the food from the king's table. How do we know where to draw the line?

16. How could we stay faithful and trust in God's sovereign plan when we face difficulties/ challenges/ persecution/'defeat'?

17. *Read 1 Peter 2:9-12.* How does this passage help us think about our identity and behaviour as God's people in a hostile world?

18. The temptation for Daniel to conform must have been very strong, yet he remained faithful to God under pressure. How can we as Christians maintain our identity as God's people and resist the temptation to conform (cf. Romans 12:2)

Study 2: “Revealer of Mysteries” (Daniel 2)

Getting Started

1. Could you remember the most bizarre dream you had either recently or from young? How did that dream make you feel?

Context

2. Where and when do the events of Daniel 2 take place? How strong would the Babylonian Kingdom have seemed to the Israelites (think back to chapter 1)?

Digging In

3. From verses 1-13, Nebuchadnezzar seems to be urgent with his command. Why do you think Nebuchadnezzar was so urgent? (v1, 29)
4. What is the reason that Nebuchadnezzar asks for both the recount of the dream and the interpretation?
5. Compare the Chaldeans' response to Nebuchadnezzar in v.10-11 and Daniel's response to Nebuchadnezzar in verses 27-28. What are the similarities and differences of their responses?
6. How is Daniel's God different from what the Chaldeans thought about their gods?

7. After Daniel found out from Arioch about the story behind the king's urgent decree, Daniel seemed to incisively know that he would be able to show the interpretation of the dream to the king (v.16). Why do you think Daniel was so confident? (1:17)

8. In light of what we know about Daniel's gift, do you think that the actions of Daniel from v.17-23 were remarkably counter-intuitive? (I.e. would you expect Daniel to respond the way he did as in v.17-23?) Why or why not?

9. What kind of God do we see from Daniel's prayer?

10. If wisdom comes only from God, how can we receive it? What is the appropriate response? (cf. v20-23, 27-30)

11. Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom were quite formidable. He was the longest reigning king of the Babylonian Empire and secular history records Nebuchadnezzar as a brutal, powerful, and ambitious king.¹ Despite of that, what does God reveal to King Nebuchadnezzar about the nature of his own kingdom?

12. What is God revealing about the ultimate future of human kingdoms? How does that change the way we think about the powerful human kingdoms of today?

¹ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Nebuchadnezzar.html>

13. By the end of the chapter:

- a. What is the status of Daniel and his friends by the end of the chapter?

- b. What does Nebuchadnezzar understand about their God?

Thinking it Through

14. According to these passage, how and when does God bring in his eternal Kingdom?

- Luke 1:31-33
- John 18:36
- Matthew 21:42-44
- Mark 1:14-15, 9:1, 14:61-62
- Mark 15:16-20, 15:26-32
- Mark 15:43, Acts 1:6-8
- Hebrews 12:25-28
- Revelation 11:15-18

Application

15. Jesus tells us to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

- a. **Knowing that there is only one everlasting kingdom which is superior above all others**, how does it look like to seek God’s kingdom in your day-to-day life?

- b. Why can we be assured that trusting in God and seeking his kingdom first is not folly?

16. The Chaldeans had their own view of how their gods would work as opposed to how the true God revealed himself to be. [The gods of the Chaldeans seemed to be distant to be bothered with revealing the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar (v.11); however, the God of Daniel is an almighty yet merciful God who spared the lives of Daniel & friends by revealing the dream to Daniel.]

We are prone to construct our own views of God. What are some false impressions of God that we may have in SMACC that we will need to correct ourselves from?

17. In crisis Daniel and his friends prayed for mercy. When God answered, all praise was given to Him. How can we learn from this example?

18. Daniel was bestowed with the gift of understanding in all visions and dreams, yet he humbly depended on God as he exercised the gift he has, recognizing the giver of his gift.

As a follower of Jesus with the message of the gospel, how am I using it to serve God's kingdom in the settings (phase of life, location, influence) that God has placed me in? Choose one below to discuss.

- Singlehood
- Marriage
- Workplace
- Recreation
- Neighbourhood
- Family
- Dreams (aspirations)

What is the attitude you carry as you do so?

Prayer

- Thank God for establishing his everlasting kingdom in Christ
- Praise God that he is always faithful and is with us through all things
- Pray for humility and dependence as we seek to live as followers of Christ

Study 3: “Serving the God Who Saves From Death” (Daniel 3)

Digging In

Read Daniel 3:1-7

1. What did King Nebuchadnezzar command and why did he do so?

2. How did the people respond to King Nebuchadnezzar’s command?

Read Daniel 3:8-23

3. What do you think motivates the men who denounce the Jews?

4. Why wouldn’t Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego bow down to the golden image?

5. What do you think about Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego’s answer to the King? What do they expect from God in this situation?

6. How did the King deal with his fury against Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?

Read Daniel 3:24-30

7. What did the king see in the fiery furnace? What was surprising?

8. How did the King respond to all that happened to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego?

Thinking It Through

9. What can we learn from the example of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in this story?

10. In what ways are you pressured to obey human authority instead of fearing God?

11. What can we learn about God from Daniel 3?

12. Does God promise to save his people from trouble and persecution? (See also Romans 8:31-39)

13. How can we be encouraging those around us who suffer persecution for their faith in Christ?

Study 4: “The Most High Does As He Pleases” (Daniel 4)

Getting Started

1. What are things that people are proud about and how can we see it expressed?

Digging In

Read Daniel 4: 1-3

2. Who is writing this passage and what is the purpose of writing this?

Read Daniel 4:4-9

3. When and how is Daniel introduced to us? What is the significance of this?

Read Daniel 4:10-18

4. What strikes you as interesting in this vision? What about the dream is terrifying

Read Daniel 4:19-27

5. What do you think of how Daniel broke the news to the king (v19) and his counsel after (v27)?

6. What is the purpose of the dream?

Read Daniel 4:28-33

7. Based on what King Nebuchadnezzar says in v30, what do you think is revealed about him?

Read Daniel 4:34-37

8. What do you think led to the recovery of Nebuchadnezzar?

9. What was his response?

10. What has been the purpose of all the events that happened?

Thinking it Through

11. What has God revealed about himself in this passage?

12. How does God act towards those who exalt themselves, instead of honouring him?

13. *Read Philippians 2:1-11*

a. How does Christ contrast to King Nebuchadnezzar? In what ways is he similar?

b. How are we to be like Christ? (Philippians 2:1-5, cf. Mark 10:42-45)

Application

14. How should God's total sovereign rule (in Christ) even over proud and powerful rulers be a comfort to us?

15. Share a time when you have been proud, and failed to honour God. What does this passage teach us we should do instead?

16. Have you ever had the things that brought you contentment and pride stripped away? How did you respond? How does Hebrews 12:1-11 teach us to respond?

17. In response to the interpretation of the dream, Daniel advised the king to change his ways. What would you like to change about yourself in response to this passage?

Prayer

Study 5: “Remember The Lord, The Judge” (Daniel 5)

Digging In

Read Daniel 5:1-4

1. What impressions are we given of King Belshazzar?

2. How does he treat the holy vessels from the Temple?

Read Daniel 5:5-16

3. What is the king's response to the writing hand?

4. How is Daniel described?

5. How is Daniel contrasted with all the king's wise men?

Read Daniel 5:17-30

6. What is the message for King Belshazzar?

7. Why is God judging in this way?

8. What lesson did King Belshazzar fail to learn from his predecessor?

Application

9. Are there truths about God you would prefer to ignore? What are the dangers of that?

10. Read Hebrews 10:26-39, what warnings and encouragements are here for us?

11. How can we help each other remember and pass on the knowledge of the truth?

Study 6: “Unflinching Witness” (Daniel 6)

Getting Started

1. Have you ever felt in danger or under attack? How did you react or cope?

Context

2. What is the historical setting of this chapter? Where are we in salvation history? (cf. 2 Kings 25:1-21)

Digging In

Read Daniel 6.

3. What was the impetus for Daniel’s colleagues to find fault with him?

4. What did Daniel’s colleagues propose to the king?

5. How did Daniel’s colleagues persuade the King to pass the law?

6. Why do you think the satraps used this method?

7. What is Daniel’s response to the decree?

Study 7: “The Kingdom of the Saints” (Daniel 7)

Getting Started

1. Have you watched or heard of a story/game/match/tournament/race/competition where there was an unthinkable comeback? What made it exciting?

Context

2. What genre (type of literature) does Daniel 7 fall under? What characterizes such genre?
3. In chronological timeline, when did Daniel have his visions? What about the timeline which Daniel’s visions portray?

Digging In

Read Daniel 7:1-8, 19-27

4. In the table below, write down the descriptions of the beasts and see if you could draw them out pictorially to help us understand better the vision that Daniel had.

Beasts #	Description	Illustration
1		
2		
3		
4		

5. What do you think the readers (both contemporary & modern) of Daniel 7 are to make of the beasts described in Daniel's Vision?

Read Daniel 7:9-18

6. We see the introduction of the Ancient of Days from the verses we read. What do we learn about the Ancient of Days and what he is going to do?

Ponder:
In a showdown between good and evil, do you think either side has a 50:50 chance of winning? Why?

7. Let's investigate the identity of the one like a son of man.

Daniel's Description	Passage Look-Up	Inferences
v.13 – with the clouds of heaven	Ps. 104:3; Isa. 19:1; Rev. 1:7 Rev. 14:14	
v.13 – son of man	Ps. 8:4; Ezek. 2:1; Mark 13:26; 14:61-62 Mat. 24:30; 26:64 Luke 21:27	
v.14 – given dominion and glory and a kingdom ... which shall not pass away	Dan. 2:44 Dan. 4:34	

8. A summary of the Daniel's visions can be found in Daniel 2:16-18. In v.18, we see a switch whereby it is now the saints of the Most High who shall receive the kingdom forever (whereas v.14 says it's the son of man). Why do you think the kingdom of the son of man is interchangeable with the saints of the Most High? (cf. Matthew 25:34)

9. Before the saints of the Most High inherit the everlasting kingdom (v.27), what do Daniel's visions say must take place?

10. Seeing how it would all end, why do you think Daniel was still alarmed in v.28?

Thinking it Through

11. Looking back at Question 4, what do you think the purpose of recording Daniel's dream has for the people of Daniel's time? How about us?

Application

12. Back in Daniel 2, we asked "*Knowing that there is only one everlasting kingdom which is superior above all others, how does it look like to seek God's kingdom in your day-to-day life?*"

How has your life since then demonstrated the grace of God working in and through you to live for the kingdom which the Saints of the Most High will inherit?

Is there any area of your life which you will need to repent of? Is there any area of your life you thank God for his enabling grace? Share and pray with each other.

13. *Read Philippians 2:12-13: "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

a) Have there been times where you are maligned for your faith?

b) Knowing what to expect (persecution, troubles, cost of following Christ, sin in the world) before being able to fully enjoy the kingdom of the Saints, how can we encourage and remind each other to persevere?

Prayer

- Pray the Lord's prayer (Mat. 6:9-13) weaved with your own words as you reflect on the kingdom of the Saints
- Pray that he who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ

Study 8: “Let Your Kingdom Come” (Daniel 8)

Digging In

Read Daniel 8:1-14

1. When did the vision appear to Daniel?

2. Describe the vision that Daniel saw. Complete the middle column of the table below.

What was it?	What did it do?	What does it represent?
Ram		
Goat		
4 horns		
Little horn		

3. How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled and what will be the outcome?

4. Do you think there is any significance to the period of time that is mentioned in 8:14?

Read Daniel 8:15-27

- 5. What helped Daniel to understand the vision?

- 6. What was the vision concerning?

- 7. Complete the table above, based on the interpretation given by Gabriel.

- 8. What effect did the vision have on Daniel? Why do you think he responded this way?

Application

- 9. Read Matthew 24:3-31.
 - a. What does Jesus tell us will happen in the last days?

 - b. How should we respond to all that Jesus had mentioned in this passage?

- 10. Read 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17.
 - a. How similar are the events in this passage to the events in Daniel 8?

2 Thessalonians 2	Daniel 8

- b. How are we to live in light of all that will happen?

Study 9: “God’s Assurance of Restoration” (Daniel 9)

Getting Started

1. “God is just a grumpy old man... always looking for things to be angry about!” How would you respond to that statement?

Digging In

Read Daniel 9:1-3

2. The first year of Darius places this chapter about 65-70 years after the start of the Exile. Read Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:1; 29:10-14 and Leviticus 26:40-42.
 - a. What does God promise in these verses?
 - b. How does Daniel respond?
 - c. How must Daniel be feeling and thinking?

Read Daniel 9:4-19

3. In the following verses, how does Daniel describe:

Verse	The people	God
v4-6		
v7-11		
v12-15		

4. Daniel asked God for forgiveness. (v16-19) Do you think God should forgive and restore them? Why or why not?

5. Why does Daniel make his plea?

Read Daniel 9:20-23

6. Why did Gabriel appear before Daniel?

7. When did Gabriel appear?

8. What does this tell us about God?

Read Daniel 9:24-27

9. Fill up the table below:

Verse	What do these verses tell us?	How does this answer Daniel's prayer?
v24		
v25-27		

10. Ultimately, how does God intend to solve the problems that the Israelites have? (v25-27)

Connecting to Christ

Looking back...

The rededication of the temple and the people under Ezra can be seen as the fulfilment of the first 7 sevens. For the next period of history (62 sevens) Jerusalem was occupied by Alexander the Great of Greece, then by the Ptolemies of Egypt, then by the Seleucids of Syria during which they suffered terrible persecution under Antiochus IV, before being occupied by the Romans in 63BC. Finally in AD 70 the Roman general Titus defiled the temple before destroying both it and Jerusalem.

11. From the following verses, how do we see Jesus accomplishing the events of the last seven?

- a. Isaiah 53:8
- b. Luke 22:19-20
- c. Matthew 27:50-51
- d. Hebrews 9:11-12
- e. Ephesians 1:7-8
- f. John 6:69

Looking forward...

12. What still remains for the 70 sevens to be complete?

13. Why the delay? (See 2 Peter 3:4,8-9)

Thinking It Through/Application

14. What do we learn about God and about us in this passage?

15. What can we learn from Daniel in how we ought to approach God? Is this how you approach God?

16. What does this passage teach us about how God might answer our prayers?

17. Read Hebrews 11 – how does Daniel embody what this passage teaches?

Prayer

Study 10: “Persevere to the End to Receive the Inheritance”

(Daniel 10-12)

Digging In

Read Daniel 10:1-3

1. What are the circumstances in which Daniel receives his final vision?

Read Daniel 10:4-14 and Daniel 10:18-11:1

2. What glimpse do we get here into activities in the spiritual realm?

3. Why has this angel come to Daniel?

Daniel 11:2-35 outlines in remarkable detail the manoeuvres of future kings, especially the conflict between the Kings of the South (Egypt) and the Kings of the North (Syria). Verses 29-35 again focus on a particularly wicked king who will oppress God’s people.

Read Daniel 11:26-35

4. What assurance is found in the repetition of the phrase “the appointed time” (v29,35)?

5. What will the experience be of those faithful to God?

Read Daniel 11:36-12:1

6. What will this final king be like?

7. What hope is there? (v36b,45,1)

Read Daniel 12:2-4

8. What happens at the end?

Read Daniel 12:5-13

9. How long until these things are fulfilled?

10. What will the outcome be?

11. What is Daniel to do with this vision? Why?

12. What encouragement would this vision have been to Daniel and the exiles?

Application

Looking back...

History saw the kingdoms of the Ptolomies (in Egypt) and the Seleucids (in Syria) in conflict just as the angel describes. We can see how Daniel 11:29-35 again refers to the suffering of the Jews under Antiochus IV. Daniel 12:2-3 clearly speak of a resurrection day, and at the very end Daniel is given a personal assurance of his eternal future.

13. What do we learn about resurrection from Jesus?

a. John 11:23-25

b. John 5:24-29

Looking forward...

Read Daniel 12:9-10 and Revelation 22:10-11.

14. What is different about the times?

15. What is the same?

16. From the following verses, what do we learn about the resurrection and judgement?

a. Revelation 20:11-15

b. 1 Peter 1:3-5

c. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18

Application

17. What encouragement do you have from Daniel 10-12?